

Ecology of the Pacific Northwest

Spring 2026

Faculty: Gerardo Chin-Leo, Ph.D. and Paul Przybylowicz, Ph.D.

Description

The Pacific Northwest contains a wide variety of ecosystems that include alpine glaciated peaks, temperate rainforests, the Puget Sound, and exposed rocky intertidal zones. This creates an ideal opportunity to compare the ecology of a number of diverse ecosystems and organisms therein.

This introductory program will study the ecology and biological diversity of major habitats in the Pacific Northwest. We will explore aquatic habitats including estuaries, tide marshes and the outer shore as well as terrestrial habitats such forests, coastal dunes and prairies. There will be lab and field work to develop microscopy skills and field sampling methods. A multi-day field trip will provide an opportunity to survey various ecosystems and to conduct fieldwork. Seminar will explore the conflicts associated with conservation and exploitation of natural resources in the Pacific Northwest. Group and independent research projects will apply knowledge and skills developed in lectures, labs and field work.

This program will involve a significant amount of time in the field, regardless of weather. There will be several 3–4-mile hikes (round trip) through forests and along the Pacific beaches, as well as weekly field exercises either in forest or the marine environment. There will also be a **four day-long field trip**, Week 8 May 19-22 to the Olympic Peninsula, staying at the town of La Push, WA.

Schedule

TUE 9-noon **Lecture** Purce Hall 7

1-3 PM **Seminar** Purce Hall 7 or Purce Hall 8

WED 9-noon **Lecture** Purce Hall 2

THU 9 - 4 PM **Lab or Field**, Lab 1 3046

FRI 9 -noon **Computer Lab** Evans Hall, 2612 & 2617 or **Workshop** Purce Hall 7

Books

Marine Biology. Castro and Huber. McGraw Hill. (12th edition is latest). OK to purchase back to 8th edition. ISBN10:1266571531 (12th Ed). Also check for leased or electronic copies.

Northwest Trees: Identifying and understanding the region's native trees. Arno. The Mountaineer Books. ISBN 978-15-9485041-7). 2007

Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Pojar and MacKinnon. Partners Publishing. 2004. ISBN: 978-1772130089

Mountain in the Clouds. Brown. University of Washington Press. 1995. 9780295974750

The Final Forest: Big trees, forks, and the Pacific Northwest. Dietrich. University of Washington Press. 2010. ISBN: 978-0-295-99062-0

Native Peoples of the Olympic Peninsula: Who we are. 2nd edition. Wary and Murray. University of Oklahoma Press. 2015. ISBN: 978-0-861-4670-6

Shell Games: A true story of cops, con men, and the smuggling of America's strangest wildlife. Welch, C. Harper Perennial. 2011. ISBN: 978-0-06-153714-1

Fees

\$500 fee covers an overnight field trip , including lodging and transportation (\$450) and kayak trip, and required lab fee (\$50).

Anticipated Credit Equivalencies:

6 - Introductory Marine Ecology, 6 - Introductory Forest Ecology, 4 - Natural History of PNW

Registration

Course Reference Numbers (16): 30102